

The Eco-Side of Sake



Vine Connections' portfolio of premium Japanese ginjo sake comes from ancient, family-run breweries that not only utilize traditional brewing methods but also employ many practices to help preserve the land, keep the environment clean, and ensure the purest ingredients are used in their fine brews. Some of these practices include:

Pesticide/chemical-free: Our brewers seek out premium sake rice growers who use no, or virtually no, harmful pesticides, fertilizers or other chemicals.

Recyclable ingredients: By-products from the sake rice milling process are reused as animal feed or for pickling.

Purest water sources: Our breweries are built near or directly above the natural springs and rivers that supply their water. The water from these sources is typically so pristine and pure that there is no need to filter or adjust it in any way.

Sustainable community: Our brewers often use locally grown sake rice, sometimes from neighboring farmers, and employ local *kurabito* (brewing staff) to not only support the local community but also maintain quality control over growing and brewing practices.

Here are some specific eco-friendly brewing practices followed by some of our brewers.

Tentaka

(Hawk in the Heavens and Silent Stream)

- Tentaka Brewery is JAS (Japan Agricultural Standards) organically certified.
- Most sake is made from certified organic rice
- They use no pesticides (not even organic fertilizers) and no chemical disinfectants.

Takatenjin (Doi Brewery)

(Shrine of the Village)

- The water from their underground spring is so pure that there is no need to chemically adjust it.
- All post-brewing waste water is filtered to remove bacteria and impurities before it enters the sewage system.
- Roof-mounted solar panels provide the majority of the brewery's electricity.



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Ama no To

(Time of Reflection and Heaven's Door)

- “Go local” is the motto of this brewery. The brewery only uses rice from a cooperative of 19 local growers. They also source brewery staff from this same coop, which is very uncommon. Brewers typically look outside the prefecture for brewing help.
- All rice is organically grown and no pesticides are used to sterilize or disinfect the seedlings. Instead, seeds are treated with hot water to eliminate undesirables.
- 100% of the stalks (what remains after the seeds/grains are removed) are composted and returned to the soil.
- They are careful to annually rotate their rice fields, which prevents nutrient depletion in the soil and maintains soil fertility. It also helps to control specific pests, which eliminates the need for pesticides.



Nanbu Bijin

(Ancient Pillars and Southern Beauty)

- This brewery recently won second place in a national competition on sustainable agricultural methods for growing rice completely free of chemical fertilizers.



Rihaku

(Dreamy Clouds and Wandering Poet)

- Rihaku uses no chemicals in their brewery. Ozone-treated water is the exclusive cleanser used throughout the brewery. Said to be “Mother Nature’s purifier and disinfectant”, *ozone* is a naturally occurring component of fresh air that can be created with an ozone generator to help disinfect, sterilize, and remove bacteria.
- Using ozone-treated water also ensures their waste water is clean and does not need to be stripped or diluted by using additional water.



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Mantensei (Suwa Brewery)



(Star-Filled Sky)

- Suwa's well water is so pure that the only filtering it needs is a quick pass through a cotton filter.
- Maturation after brewing is done at room temperature, not in refrigerators, in order to conserve energy.



Chiyonosono

(Garden of Eternity and Sacred Power)

- Rice is grown using less than half of the amount of fertilizers allowed by Kumamoto prefecture.
- By-products from the brewing process are reused for other purposes..

Sato no Homare (Sudo Brewery)

(Pride of the Village)



- "Good sake comes from good rice, good rice comes from good soil, good soil comes from good water, and good water comes from good trees. Trees sustain and protect a sake brewery." -Brewery President, Yoshiyasu Sudo
- 900 year old Paulownia trees surround the brewery in order to keep the temperatures down in the summer to conserve energy.
- Sudo Honke is committed to preserving as many trees as possible. Their belief is this will help greenify the earth by providing a reduction in CO2 gas.
- Only organic rice is used for sake brewing.

As an additional benefit to those with food sensitivities or dietary restrictions, our brewers' sake is sulfite-free, gluten-free, and contains no preservatives or additives.